

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SSO-00 NSCE-00

AID-05 FDRE-00 ITF-05 SR-02 ORM-01 SAJ-01 ACDA-05

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R 291318Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3516

INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

DIA WASHDC

CINCPAC HONOLULU

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 7654

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, UN, VS, CB, TH

SUBJ: FURTHER THAI REACTIONS TO THE INDOCHINA SITUATION

BEGIN SUMMARY: THE CATASTROPHE IN INDOCHINA CONTINUES TO HOLD THE INTEREST OF THE THAI LEADERSHIP, INFORMED PUBLIC, AND PRESS. HOPING TO DISSOCIATE ITSELF FROM THE DISINTEGRATING SITUATION TO THE EAST, THE RTG HAS STRONGLY INDICATED ITS INTENTION TO AVOID BECOMING A HAVEN FOR EXILED POLITICAL PERSONALITIES OR REFUGEES FROM CANBODIA AND SOUTH VIETNAM. A BELIEF APPEARS TO BE GROWING AMONG SOME THOUGHTFUL THAI THAT ACCOMMODATION WITH THE NEW COMMUNIST REGIMES, PARTICULARLY IN VIETNAM, WILL PERMIT THAILAND TO ESCAPE THE HARSH FATE OF ITS NEIGHBORS. THIS FEELING SHOULD HAVE AN INFLUENCE OVER FORTH-COMING US-THAI NEGOTIATIONS ON U.S. MILITARY WITHDRAWALS AND

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POSSIBLE REENTRY RIGHTS. END SUMMARY.

1. ADCM CONTACTS OVER THE PAST FEW DAYS WITH THAI MILITARY FIGURES HAVE INDICATED THAT SOME UNCERTAINTY, AND EVEN DEPRESSION, EXISTS WITH REGARD TO THE INDOCHINA SITUATION. ON THE OTHER HAND, DAO REPRESENTATIVES HAVE SPOKEN WITH THAI NAPAL AND AIR FORCE LEADERS WHO, WHILE CONCERNED, ARE PRESSING AHEAD WITH MILITARY CONTINGENCY PLANS. DURING AN APRIL 25

MEETING WITH THE CHARGE, GENERALS KRIT SIWARA AND KRIANGSAK CHAMANAN EMPHASIZED THAI CONCERN OVER THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE U.S. MIGHT STAGE SOME VIETNAMESE EVACUATION THROUGH THAILAND.

2. THE DIRECTOR OF POLICY PLANNING, MFA, WITTHAYA WETCHACHIWA, ON APRIL 28 TOLD THE POLITICAL COUNSELOR THAT THE THAI MILITARY WOULD BE PLEASED TO AGREE TO NEGOTIATE BASE REENTRY RIGHTS IN ADVANCE IN THE EVENT THAT THE RTG DESIRED THE RETURN OF US FORCES. WITTHAYA SAID THAT OTHERS, HOWEVER, FELT THAT EVEN A SECRET AGREEMENT COULD BE A MILLSTONE AROUND THE GOVERNMENT'S NECK AS FAR AS RELATIONS WITH HANOI WERE CONCERNED. A PUBLIC AGREEMENT WOULD ENCOUNTER PRESS AND STUDENT AGITATION. WITTHAYA HOLDS A FOND HOPE FOR A RETURN TO THE TYPE OF HISTORICAL COEXISTENCE BETWEEN THAILAND AND VIETNAM WHICH PERSISTED UNTIL THE ADVENT OF THE FRENCH IN THE 19TH CENTURY. HE STATED THAT THE THAI AMBASSADOR IN VIENTIANE HAD A CONVERSATION IN MARCH WITH THE DRV AMBASSADOR THERE IN WHICH THE VIETNAMESE APPARENTLY IMPLIED THAT THE DRV WOULD CONTINUE TO PERMIT LAOS TO SERVE AS A BUFFER BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES.

3. AS A POSSIBLE INDICATION OF UNEASINESS AMONG UPPER LEVELS OF THAI SOCIETY, THE DEFENSE ATTACHE REPORTS THAT SOME DISTANT RELATIVES OF THE THAI ROYAL FAMILY ARE BUSILY MOVING THEIR TANGIBLE ASSETS OUTSIDE OF THE COUNTRY AND PLACING THEIR CHILDREN IN SCHOOLS ABROAD. COMMENT: WE CAN NOT EVALUATE THE ACCURACY OR SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS SNIPPET. ONE NERVOUS PRINCE DOES NOT NECESSARILY HERALD A TREND. END COMMENT.

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4. ALTHOUGH THE U.S. PRESENCE LOOMS LARGE IN ANY DISCUSSION OF THAILAND'S RESPONSE TO FUTURE MILITARY CHALLENGES, NOT ALL OBSERVERS EXCLUDE A ROLE FOR THE U.S. "THE NATION", AN ENGLISH-LANGUAGE BANGKOK DAILY, HAS TEMPERED ITS FORMERLY ANTI-U.S. LINE IN RECENT WEEKS AS THE SITUATION IN INDOCHINA HAS DETERIORATED AND THE NORTH VIETNAMESE THREAT TO THE REGION HAS BECOME MORE APPARENT. THE EDITOR, SAM KRISHNIAH, IS DEEPLY CONCERNED ABOUT A WITHDRAWAL

OF U.S. INFLUENCE FROM THE AREA, AND THE U.S. CONGRESS'S
APPARENT LACK OF WILL TO HALT NORTH VIETNAMESE ADVANCES.
ALTHOUGH "THE NATION" HAS BEEN CRITICAL OF THE U.S.
FAILURE TO ASSIST CAMBODIA AND SOUTH VIETNAM AT A TIME
OF DIRE NEED, IT HAS ALSO BEEN HIGHLY CRITICAL OF NORTH
VIETNAMESE AGGRESSION IN RECENT WEEKS.

5. COMMENT: THE FOREGOING REFLECTS OPINIONS GARNERED
BEFORE THE FINAL AMERICAN PULL-OUT FROM SAIGON. WE CAN
ANTICIPATE INCREASING THAI ANXIETY LEVELS AS AND AFTER
THE COMMUNISTS CROSS THE FINISH LINE IN VIETNAM.
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